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SUBJECT: FINLAND: 2005 INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL  
STRATEGY REPORT, PART 1

REF: STATE 209561

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## I. SUMMARY

(U) Finland is not a significant narcotics producing or trafficking country. However, drug use and drug-related crime has increased over the past decade. Finland's constitution places a strong emphasis on the protection of civil liberties, and this sometimes has a negative effect on law enforcement's ability to investigate and prosecute drug-related crime. Electronic surveillance techniques such as wiretapping are generally prohibited in all but the most serious investigations. Finnish political culture tends to favor demand reduction and rehabilitation efforts over strategies aimed at reducing supply. Police believe increased drug use may be attributable to the wider availability of narcotics in post-cold war Europe, increased experimentation by Finnish youth, cultural de-stigmatization of narcotics use, and insufficient law enforcement resources.

(U) While there is some overland narcotics trafficking across the Russian border, police believe existing border controls are mostly effective in preventing this route from becoming a major trafficking conduit into Finland and western Europe. Estonian organized crime syndicates are believed responsible for most drug trafficking into Finland. Estonia's accession to the Schengen Treaty has complicated law enforcement efforts to combat narcotics trafficking. Asian crime syndicates have begun to use new air routes between Helsinki and Asian cities like Bangkok to facilitate trafficking-in-persons, and there is some concern that these routes could be used for narcotics trafficking as well. Finland is a major donor to the UNDCP and is active in counternarcotics efforts within the EU. Finland is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention.

## II. STATUS OF COUNTRY

(U) Narcotics production, cultivation, and the production of precursor chemicals in Finland is relatively modest in scope. Most drugs that are consumed in Finland are produced elsewhere, and Finland is not a source country for the export of narcotics abroad. Estonia, Russia, and Spain are Finland's principal sources for illicit drugs. Finnish law criminalizes the distribution, sale, and transport of narcotics; the GoF cooperates with other countries and international law enforcement organizations regarding extradition and precursor chemical control. Domestic drug abuse and rehabilitation programs are excellent, although access to rehabilitation programs for prison inmates was criticized in 2005 as being insufficient due to resource constraints.

(U) The overall incidence of drug use in Finland remains low (relative to many other western countries); however, drug use has increased over the past decade. Cocaine is rare, but amphetamines, methamphetamine, synthetic "club" drugs, and heroin and heroin-substitutes can be found. Finland has historically had one of Europe's lowest cannabis-use rates, but cannabis seizures have increased since 2004; police attribute this to new smuggling routes from southern Spain, a popular tourist destination for Finns and home to a Finnish "migr" community. Ecstasy, GHB, Ketamine ("Vitamin K") and other MDMA-type drugs are concentrated among young people and associated with the "club culture" in Helsinki and other large cities. Social Welfare authorities believe the introduction of GHB and other "date rape" drugs into Finland has led to an increase in sexual assaults. Finnish law enforcement authorities admit that resource constraints and restrictions on electronic surveillance and undercover police work complicate efforts to penetrate the ecstasy trade.

Changing social and cultural attitudes toward drug use also contribute to this phenomenon.

(U) Heroin use began to increase in Finland in the late 90's, but seizures have declined since 2004. Subutex (buprenorphine) and other heroin-substitutes seem to have supplanted actual heroin use to some extent. France remains the major source for Subutex. According to police, French doctors can prescribe up to three weeks supply of Subutex. Finnish couriers travel frequently to France to obtain their supply which is then resold illegally with a high mark-up. Possession of Subutex is legal in Finland with a doctor's prescription, but Finnish physicians do not readily write prescriptions for Subutex unless patients are actually in a supervised withdrawal program.

(U) According to Finnish law enforcement, there are approximately two dozen organized crime syndicates operating in Finland; most are based in Estonia or Russia. Since Estonia's entry into the Schengen Region, Estonian travelers to Finland are no longer subject to routine inspection at ports-of-entry, making it difficult to intercept narcotics. The police report that a drug dealer in Helsinki can phone a supplier in Tallinn, and within three hours a courier will have arrived in Helsinki via ferry with a shipment of drugs. Although Estonian syndicates control the operations, many of the domestic street-level dealers are Finns. In the past, the Estonian rings primarily smuggled Belgian or Dutch-made ecstasy into Finland, but beginning in 2003, larger quantities of Estonian-produced ecstasy began hitting the Finnish market, although the quality (and market value) is lower. Estonian smugglers also organize the shipment of Moroccan cannabis from Southern Spain to Finland. The police report that cooperation with Estonian law enforcement is excellent, and both countries maintain permanent liaison officers in the other.

(U) Russian organized crime syndicates remain active inside Finland. Russian traffickers based out of St. Petersburg are the primary suppliers of heroin, although Estonians are now active in this area as well. The police are increasingly concerned about Asian crime groups using new air routes from Helsinki to major Asian cities like Bangkok as a narcotics smuggling route. Asian syndicates are already using these routes for human smuggling and trafficking-in-persons. Finland's Frontier Guard will post a permanent liaison officer to Beijing in 2006 to better monitor this phenomenon.

### III. COUNTRY ACTIONS AGAINST DRUGS IN 2005

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(U) POLICY INITIATIVES: Finland's comprehensive policy statement on illegal drugs was issued in 1998; the statement articulated a zero-tolerance policy regarding narcotics. However, a 2001 law created a system of fines for simple possession offenses rather than jail time. The fine system enjoys widespread popular support, and is chiefly used to punish youth found in possession of small quantities of marijuana, hashish, or ecstasy. Some Finnish authorities have expressed concern about the "mixed message" that the fine system sends to Finns about drug use and would prefer stiffer penalties. There is limited political and public support for demand reduction through stronger punitive measures, however.

(U) ACCOMPLISHMENTS: The GoF's strategy in 2005 focused on regional and multilateral cooperation aimed at stemming the flow of drugs before they reach Finland's borders. In 2005, Parliament passed a law expanding the authority of the Frontier Guard to cover the entire country (not just immediate border areas), enhancing the Guard's ability to combat narcotics trafficking. Finland participated in several multilateral conferences and seminars on combating narcotics globally and in the Nordic-Baltic region. Finland's Interior Minister met with other Nordic ministers to discuss regional narcotics strategy, and in September visited Washington where he met with U.S. officials to discuss transnational security issues. Finland played an active role in EU efforts to combat narcotics trafficking.

(U) LAW ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS: The police report that arrests and seizures in 2005 are projected to have remained stable (statistics are not yet available). Law enforcement focuses limited police resources on major narcotics cases and significant traffickers. The Frontier Guard plans to station a permanent liaison officer in Asia (Beijing) for the first time in order to better monitor and combat narcotics trafficking. Finland in 2005 continued its impressive record of multilateral cooperation. Finnish police maintain liaison officers in ten European cities (six in Russia). The Prosecutor-General's Office maintains liaison officers in St. Petersburg, Tallinn, and Moscow. In addition, Finland and the other Nordic countries pool their resources and share information gathered by Nordic liaison officers stationed in 34 posts around the world. Finland is active in Europol and

Eurojust anti-narcotics efforts. Finland in 2005 chaired the Council of Baltic Sea States/Organized Crime Task Force, and a Finn was appointed as the first Director of the new EU Border Control Agency.

(U) CORRUPTION: As a matter of government policy, Finland does not encourage or facilitate illicit production or distribution of narcotic or psychotropic drugs or other controlled substances, or the laundering of proceeds from illegal drug transactions. Finnish officials do not engage in, facilitate, or encourage the illicit production or distribution of such drugs or substances, or the laundering of proceeds from illegal drug transactions. Official corruption is not a problem in Finland. There have been no arrests or prosecutions of public officials charged with corruption or related offenses linked to narcotics in Finnish history.

(U) AGREEMENTS AND TREATIES: Finland is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention, and its legislation is consistent with all the Convention's goals. Finnish judicial authorities are empowered to seize the assets, real and financial, of criminals. Finland is also a party to the 1961 UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the 1972 Protocol Amending the Single Convention, and the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances. Finland has extradition treaties with many countries, and ratified the EU extradition treaty in 1999. Finland ratified the EU Arrest Warrant in 2005. Finland is a signatory to the UN Convention Against Transnational Crime, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, and the Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants. A 1976 bilateral extradition treaty is in force between the United States and Finland, although Finland will only extradite non-Finnish citizens to the U.S. Finland in 2004 signed the bilateral instrument of the EU-U.S. Extradition Treaty; however, the Parliament has not yet ratified the treaty over concern that certain U.S. rendition practices in Europe might violate Finnish constitutional guarantees.

(U) Finland has also concluded a Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement with the United States. Finland is a member of the major Donor's Group within the Dublin Group. The vast majority of Finland's financial and other assistance to drug-producing and transit countries has been via the UNDCP. Finland concluded a bilateral extradition treaty with Estonia shortly after that country gained independence.

(U) CULTIVATION/PRODUCTION: There were no reported seizures of indigenously cultivated opiates, no recorded diversions of precursor chemicals, and no detection of illicit methamphetamine, cocaine, or LSD laboratories in Finland in 2004; reports for 2005 are not yet available. Finland's climate makes cultivation of cannabis and opiates almost impossible. Local cannabis cultivation is believed to be limited to small numbers of plants in individual homes using artificial lighting for personal use. The distribution of the 22 key precursor chemicals used for cocaine, amphetamine, and heroin production is tightly controlled.

(U) DRUG FLOW/TRANSIT: Hashish and ecstasy are the drugs most often seized by the police. Finland is not a transit country for narcotics. Most drugs trafficked into Finland originate in or pass through Estonia. Finnish authorities report that their land border with Russia is well guarded on both sides to ensure that it does not become a major transit route.

(U) DOMESTIC PROGRAMS (DEMAND REDUCTION): The GoF emphasizes rehabilitation and education over punitive measures to curb demand for illegal drugs. The central government gives substantial autonomy to local governments to address demand reduction using general revenue grants. Finnish schools in 2005 continued to educate students about the dangers of drugs. Finland's national public health service offered rehabilitation services to users and addicts. Such programs typically use a holistic approach that emphasizes social and economic reintegration into society and is not solely focused on eliminating the subject's use and abuse of illegal drugs. The government was criticized in 2005 for failure to provide adequate access to rehabilitation programs for prison inmates.

#### IV. U.S. POLICY INITIATIVES

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(U) The U.S. has historically worked with Finland and the other Nordic countries through multilateral organizations in an effort to combat narcotics trafficking in the Nordic-Baltic region. This involves assistance to and cooperation with the Baltic countries and Russia. Finland in 2005 participated in a DEA-sponsored regional drug enforcement seminar.

(U) BILATERAL COOPERATION: Finnish law enforcement maintains a close relationship with American counterparts;

cooperation is excellent.

(U) THE ROAD AHEAD: The U.S. anticipates continued close cooperation with Finland in the fight against narcotics. The only limitations to such cooperation will likely be the smaller resource base that Finnish law enforcement authorities have at their disposal.

#### IV. STATISTICAL TABLES

(U) 2005 statistics for narcotics seizures and arrests are not yet available; septel with statistics will follow as soon as they are released by the GoF.

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